

WHAT I CLAIM IS:

1. A gripper particularly adapted to hold a fish upright while a hook is being extracted from the fish's digestive system, said gripper comprising:

a first member having an outer handle portion connecting with an upper jaw portion with said upper jaw portion having an open space defined in part by spaced apart sidewalls having abrasive bottom edges,

a second member having an inner handle portion connecting with a lower jaw portion with said lower jaw portion pivotally carried in said upper jaw portion open space, and

a swivel element pivotally carried by said lower jaw portion, said swivel element formed with a top wall having an abrasive top surface and a bottom surface prepared to mate with said lower jaw portion,

wherein for use said gripper upper jaw portion may be inserted into a mouth of said fish and said lower jaw portion positioned next to a lower jaw of said fish and then said handle portions squeezed together so that said upper jaw portion abrasive bottom edges and said swivel element abrasive top surface engage said fish's lower jaw in a manner that minimizes injury to said fish.

2. A gripper as defined by Claim 1 and further characterized by,

said first member outer handle portion being aligned with said second member inner handle portion,

wherein said gripper is readily usable by right or left-handed fishermen.

3. A gripper as defined by Claim 1 and further characterized by,
said upper jaw portion sidewalls being divided respectively into lower leg segments and offset upper leg segments with said upper leg segments having radiused outer ends and top edges connected by a top wall.

4. A gripper as defined by Claim 3 and further characterized by,
said upper jaw abrasive bottom edges including sets of tooth serrations with a first outermost tooth serration being inwardly offset from an outer bottom edge of said upper jaw portion top wall,
wherein upon said swivel element being rotated fully counterclockwise, a front edge of said swivel element remains free from forming an interference fit with said upper jaw tooth serrations upon contact between said swivel element front edge and said sidewall bottom edges of said upper jaw portion.

5. A gripper as defined by Claim 1 and further characterized by,
said second member lower jaw portion formed with an offset, and
said swivel element top wall having a bottom surface formed with an offset prepared to mate with and form an interlocking fit with said lower jaw portion offset,
wherein said interlocking fit between said offsets inhibits independent movement of said swivel element upon engagement of said swivel element with said lower jaw of said fish.

6. A gripper as defined by Claim 5 and further characterized by,
said first member handle portion and said second member defined in part by a peripheral

flange extending about a central web.

7. A gripper as defined by Claim 6 and further characterized by,

said peripheral flange extending about said web of said second member being divided into a wide segment positioned about said web of said inner handle portion and a narrow segment positioned about said web of said lower jaw portion, and

said flange narrow segment being divided into a lower section and an upper section, said upper section having a first part and a second part connected by an enlarged part with said first part being flat, said second part being angularly offset and positioned below said first part, and said enlarged part defining said lower jaw portion offset and having an opening to loosely carry a pivot pin forming in part said pivot connection between said lower jaw portion and said swivel element.

8. A gripper as defined by Claim 6 and further characterized by,

said web of said lower jaw portion formed with a boss extending outward from said web with respective end surfaces of said boss aligning with edges of a narrow segment of said peripheral flange, and an opening through said boss carrying a pivot pin forming in part said first member-second member pivot connection.

9. A gripper as defined by Claim 6 and further characterized by,

said web of said inner member handle portion having a hole, and a loop-shaped strap carried in said hole.

10. A gripper as defined by Claim 7 and further characterized by,

said swivel element having sidewalls fitting loosely over said upper section of said lower jaw portion flange with an inner end of said swivel element top wall being offset from inner ends of said swivel element sidewalls to form a space prepared to receive said second part of said lower jaw portion flange upper section upon counterclockwise rotation of said swivel element, and said swivel element top wall bottom surface having an outer flat part prepared to mate with said first part of said lower jaw flange upper section upon clockwise rotation of said swivel element.

11. A gripper for holding a fish upright by its lower jaw to facilitate removal of a fishhook from a mouth of said fish, said gripper comprising:

a first member having an outer handle portion integrally joined to an upper jaw portion with said upper jaw portion having sidewalls spaced apart to form an open space, and upper leg segments of said sidewalls having bottom edges formed with respective sets of tooth serrations,

a second member having an peripheral flange extending about a central web to define an inner handle portion integrally joined to a lower jaw portion, said peripheral flange having a wide segment extending about said inner handle portion and a narrow segment extending about said lower jaw portion, said flange narrow segment including an upper section having a first flat part and a second flat part connected by an enlarged part forming an offset that positions said flange second flat part below said flange first flat part, and said second member disposed in said upper jaw portion open space and pivotally joined to said first member by a pin carried by said upper jaw portion sidewalls and said second member lower jaw portion, and

a swivel element having a sled-like body comprising sidewalls connected by a top wall

with an inner end of the top wall being offset from inner ends of the sidewalls to form a space, said top wall having a top surface formed with a set of tooth serrations and having a bottom surface formed with a flat outer part and an angularly positioned flat inner part connected by a Z-like shaped offset, said swivel element disposed on said lower jaw portion with said lower jaw portion positioned between said swivel element sidewalls and said swivel element being pivotally attached to said lower jaw portion by a pin extending through an opening in each said swivel element sidewalls and loosely through an opening in said lower jaw portion flange enlarged part,

wherein upon rotation of said swivel element to a position that aligns said swivel element tooth serrations with said upper jaw portion tooth serrations, said swivel element bottom surface flat outer part mates with said lower jaw portion flange first flat part and said swivel element bottom surface offset mates with said lower jaw portion flange offset to form an interlocking fit that inhibits relative downward movement of said swivel element when said sets of tooth serrations engage said fish's lower jaw so that a fisherman using said gripper to hold a fish upright may remove a hook from said fish's mouth.

12. A gripper particularly adapted for use by a fisherman to allow said fisherman to hold a fish upright using one hand while at the same time said fisherman using his other hand may remove a fishhook from a mouth of said fish, said gripper comprising:

a first member defined by an outer handle portion that includes a central rib surrounded by a peripheral flange with said outer handle portion having an upper end connecting with a lower end of an upper jaw portion, said upper jaw portion having spaced apart inverted L-like shaped sidewalls divided into lower leg segments connecting with upper leg segments with said sidewall

lower leg segments forming an open space and a set of aligned openings, and said sidewall upper leg segments having radiused outer ends and top edges connected by a top wall and bottom edges formed with sets of tooth serrations positioned inward from an outer lower edge end of said top wall,

a second member defined by an inner handle portion connecting with a lower jaw portion, said portions having a central web and a peripheral flange with said inner handle portion web surrounded by a wide segment of said peripheral flange and said lower jaw portion web surrounded by a narrow segment of said flange, said lower jaw portion flange having a first flat part and a second flat part positioned below said first flat part and connected by an enlarged part defining a Z-like shaped offset and formed with an opening, and a boss carried by said lower jaw portion web with end surfaces of said boss aligning with edges of said lower jaw portion flange and an opening extending through said boss, said lower jaw portion disposed in said open space of said upper jaw and there secured by a pin inserted in said lower jaw portion boss opening and said upper jaw portion sidewall openings to form a pivot connection between said members, and

a swivel element having a sled-like body defined by spaced apart sidewalls connected by a top wall with an inner end of said top wall offset from inner ends of said sidewalls to form a space, a top surface of said top wall formed with a set of tooth serrations, and a bottom surface of said top wall formed with an outer flat part and an angularly positioned inner flat part with said parts connected by a Z-like shaped offset, said swivel element positioned on said lower jaw portion with said swivel element sidewalls fitting loosely next to said edges of said lower jaw portion flange and said swivel element secured to said lower jaw portion by a pin extending loosely through said lower jaw portion flange enlarged part opening and through openings in said

swivel element sidewalls,

wherein upon insertion of said radiused outer ends of said upper jaw portion sidewalls into said fish's mouth and movement of tooth serrations of said swivel element into contact with skin of said fish's lower jaw, said loose pivot connection between said swivel element and said lower jaw portion optimizes a seating area of said swivel element tooth serrations against said fish's lower jaw to minimize injury to said fish's lower jaw from contact by said upper jaw portion sets of tooth serrations and said swivel element tooth serrations with said fish's lower jaw.